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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 000863

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2015

TAGS: ASEC AMGT PREL PTER EAC COUNTER TERRORISM

SUBJECT: SANAA EAC MEETING - 03 APRIL 2005

REF: (A) 8386-05 (TEARLINE)

Classified By: RSO Tim Laas for reasons 1.4 (b), (c) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: AMB convened an EAC on 03 April, 2005 to discuss recent security threats. RMAS briefed EAC on threat information of a sensitive nature involving an unidentified arab male in Sana,a who is apparently in the final stages of attack planning against " American leaders" in Yemen. AMB emphasized the sensitivity of the threat information to the EAC. Security posture of embassy employees was discussed and the decision was made to cancel visa services at the consular section for a period of 48 hours, with a core EAC to be held Tuesday, 05 April, 2005 for reassessment of the security situation. AMB directed EAC members to have section chiefs immediately evaluate all current and future TDY personnel in their respective sections, as to the necessity of their presence at the embassy. AMB directed EAC to have all mission employees heighten awareness and significantly increase the variance of arrival/departure times to the embassy. EAC personnel represented at the meeting included: DCM, LEGATT, RMAS, POLE, OMC, FPD, MO, RMO, PD, USAID, DAO, CONS, MSG, IPC and RSO. End Summary.

¶2. (S/NF) RMAS briefed EAC on an arab male named Kan'an who was reported to be in Sana,a. He is reported to have had contact with various terrorists in Iraq and has a team of ten personnel with him in Sana,a. The team is reported to have already finished surveillance and attack planning of " American leaders" and is only waiting for funding, equipment, and orders to commence operations. RMAS stressed that the ROYG has been working on the issue and that there is no information to date that the team has received funding for the operations. DCM stated that this issue, though currently the main threat facing the American community in Yemen, had to be put in the context of other recent security incidents, to include the hijacking of Yemeni USAID contractors outside of Sana,a, the Bab-al-Yemen shopping district grenade incident, thwarted grenade attack on AMB in DEC 04, general threats against the Aden Sheraton, and several angry Yemeni fathers whose sons had been allegedly killed or captured fighting coalition forces in Iraq. RSO also noted a FEB RMAS report of an unidentified male with a Saudi accent asking about future clustering of Americans or westerners at the Sheraton Hotel, Aden, and Tourist City. DCM stated that, given all the threat reports, we had to seriously consider our profile/footprint in Yemen.

¶3. (S/NF) AMB stated to EAC that the embassy community must reduce their presence and profile in Sana,a. AMB directed all section chiefs to analyze their current TDY staff and determine how essential each member is to the mission. In addition, section chiefs must make a determination on all future TDY personnel as to whether or not it is essential to have them come to Yemen. AMB stated the default should be to deny TDY personnel entry unless the section chief feels they can convince the chain of command that they are absolutely necessary to the mission. Each section chief is responsible for screening their incoming TDY personnel and developing a mechanism by which the chain of command can screen personnel as well. AMB directed the EAC to look at embassy employees' work habits and develop individual plans, allowing for maximum variance of arrival/work times and varying vehicular routes.

¶4. (S/NF) MO brought up the issue as to whether or not the FSN community should be included in varying arrival times and work schedules. The EAC determined no specific mention of threats against the FSN community. RSO provided copies of post tripwires to EAC and noted the situations listed that would cover potential for drawdown, authorized departure, and ordered departure. Three situations listed for potential drawdown had been met regarding tripwires. EAC concurred with assessment but did not believe post met the criteria for "Authorized Departure" given the current environment. The EAC decided that the appropriate response to the current threat should include reducing TDY personnel in- country, significantly reducing TDY visits to Yemen, issuing warden messages and public safety announcements.

15. (S/NF) RSO advised the EAC that he passed a sensitive tear line regarding the newest threat to senior MOI officials during a 3 April, 2005 meeting. In that meeting the RSO asked ROYG to provide enhanced coverage of frequently used routes from the Embassy housing area to the Embassy, focusing on choke points, suspicious persons, packages or vehicles with an eye for improvised explosive devices similar to those used in Iraq against insurgent targets. Additionally, RSO informed the EAC that he requested special coverage by marked police cars or gun trucks at the front of Embassy residences or coverage by more frequent roving patrols, and added perimeter and internal security at the Sheraton Hotel in Aden. Finally, RSO thanked MOI for the ongoing coverage of the Sheraton Hotel in Sana'a but asked that MOI review best practice at the Sheraton Sana'a as well as at the checkpoint on the Embassy perimeter where employees and guests enter the Embassy's first security cordon. MOI did a walk around with the RSO on the Embassy perimeter observing where sentries fighting positions could be bolstered.

16. (S/NF) RSO also briefed EAC members about the current condition of the LGF radio network. RSO informed the EAC that the radio network is on a banned VHF frequency that has little ability to send and receive messages between key posts due to the lack of transmitters and mountainous terrain in Sana'a. Additionally, RSO noted that the LGF radio equipment is deteriorating rapidly. However, RSO advised the EAC that 117K USD of UHF equipment has been provided through DS funding and is in shipment. Noting the inability of post to obtain new frequencies, the EAC discussed the viability of placing LGF communications temporarily on the only existing frequency that is also the E&E network. RSO recommended this solution due to the fact that the Embassy has tried for years to purchase an additional frequency with no success. On the subject of emergency communications, RSO also requested MO and the EAC look at new software reported to be available for mobile phones in Sana'a, which would allow the Embassy to have a more responsive telephone tree programmed with all community members mobile phone text messaging addresses that will allow one emergency or warden message to be sent via text message instantly to all community member/employees whose mobile phones are programmed. EAC members showed interest in this enhancement for sending urgent unclassified text messages regarding breaking security alerts. MO noted difficulties in dealing with ROYG contacts regarding the placement of transmitters and acquiring of new frequencies. The Ambassador concurred that improvements in emergency communication need ongoing attention from applicable Embassy offices to include IPC and RSO.

17. (S/NF) EAC concluded with the following decisions being made: Effective immediately, and for the next 48 hours, the consular section would not be open for visa applicants/services, a security advisory would be issued to the embassy community regarding best security practices with routes, travel, work schedules, and personal habits, and a warden message would be issued, advising all Americans in Yemen to defer in-country travel pending clarification of the security situation. EAC considered issuing an advisory restricting travel to and from home and the embassy but decided that was not warranted at this time but would be evaluated again at the core EAC meeting in 48 hours. DCM instructed each section head to have their staff read this EAC report to ensure clear understanding of the EAC security guidance. AMB reiterated again that section heads must commence TDY personnel reduction screening immediately.
Krajeski